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## IRON WORK, NEW AND OLD.

AMERICAN ornamental iron work is well nigh as good as the best. It is true that we have among us at the present no Quentin Matsys—there I go against a snag, for some authority calls him Quentin Matsys, another Quinten Matsy, another Quentin Massys, and there are other names of him if you have time to look them up. He is as perplexing as Mahomet, who in some places is Mohamet, in other Mahommed and others Mohamed, Mohomed and Mohomat. As I was about to remark, American iron work challenges comparison with almost any of modern design. It combines strength with apparent delicacy, and illustrations that lately appeared in this magazine prove that real art has been wrought into lamp-posts, gates, fences, posts, gasoliers, scroll work and the like.

Among the recent achievements of iron workers in New York city is the iron fence running about the colossal Dakota Flats, near Central Park; the fence and gate erected before the door of the American Art Galleries in East Twenty-third Street, and the lamp-posts at the main entrance of Cyrus Field's new building at Battery Place. The fence about the Dakota building consists of rails of iron run through posts that are placed ten or twelve feet apart, and these posts are flanked by rampant dragons and fronted by a face. This face is strongly molded, a picturesque Gothic countenance, with jutting brows, deeply chiseled eye sockets and a beard. The fence before the door of the American Art Galleries is an ornate piece of work, suggesting the screens and railings that separate interior chapels from the choirs and aisles of some of the European cathedrals. The lamp-posts before the Washington building are perhaps the most striking pieces of work in iron that the city shows. They are tall, slender, gracefully ornamented near the base with fluting and spirals, and terminating at the top in a square lantern, paned with beveled glass and upheld by curling tendrils. Three slight convexities in the shaft are overlaid with acanthus leaves and vines. But the important feature of each post is the dragon that winds its snaky folds about it and half ornaments, half supports it. The dragon is of slender body and its tail frays out into a scroll that extends to the masonry of the building and forms a rail or balustrade, while the post is further united to the structure by the dragon's spiny wings that extend back against the wall where they terminate in spirals and are fastened to the stone. The dragon with crest thrown back and claws gripping the post is represented as viciously gnawing the iron. Post and dragon are painted a dark green, and the striking ornamentation of the posts suits with the architectural dignity of the building.

Just across the way from these artistic dragons is old Bowling Green where George III.'s effigy in lead and gilding was torn down and melted up for bullets, that found lodgment in many of his troops a century ago. The same iron fence that then surrounded it encircles it to-day, the posts having parted with their round heads to supply the colonial artillery with shot. Between that graceless but historically precious fence and the dragons across the street one may establish contrasts to prove America's rapid progress not alone in liberty but the arts.

Yet, while in the matter of iron work we are making excellent designs, it must be confessed that our achievements in that direction are so recent that they have not been generally adopted, and that for years to come Europe will surpass us in quantity if not in quality of such work. In a

walk through portions of the fairest regions of England, I saw some of the noblest iron gates that, I fancy, were ever made. They formed the entrance to drives that led up to fine old manors through aisles of elms and chestnuts.

One that I passed in Lincolnshire was especially fine. A broad drive descending for perhaps a quarter of a mile, a fertile slope from a picturesque baronial hall to the shaded highway, was cut off from the public road by forty or fifty feet of iron fence, separated from adjacent hedge rows by massive posts of stone. The fence had an inward

rings suspended from ornamental plates of metal. But as a bell is heard farther than a rap why should not bell pulls be made artistic, for the majority will use the convenient bell in preference to the artistic knocker. Artistic bell pulls have been made. There is one on a house in Antwerp that represents a long, curved tongue lolling out of a griffin's mouth, and another, more odd, takes the shape of a twisted serpent, whose tail you tweak when you wish to ring the bell.

JAPANESE goat skin rugs are the most decorative, despite what their small value may be in dollars and cents, of any sort of the guaranteed antiques. The long-haired white and black and gray rugs that we see spread about the floors are generally made from these Japanese goat skins, and their appearance is that of articles worth several times their real cost. For summer houses where matting is laid they are most appropriate and add very materially to the furnishing, their neat cleanly look make them pleasant to look upon and delightful under foot. Mr. Frank L. Haight has imported them to this country.

THE decorative paneling of the inner side of doors of apartments needs more attention than it receives. The question that arises is, should not a door be more in character with the wall surface than hard wood hues or their imitations present? In French palace reception and cabinet rooms, and in the gilded salons of old aristocratic Parisian quarter of St. Germain, as well as in the chateaux scattered over the continent, we find doors ordinarily white enameled, with gilded beading, and thus a disadvantageous contrast is avoided. Better than this is the filling the panels with light landscape pictures in bright colors, with rocks and cascades that dash into foam and roll off in silver waves, with islets covered with shells and all varieties of scenery.

A Japanese style of decoration, highly effective for door panels, is the using a black paste for the back ground of a landscape in the distance, and covering the middle and foreground with brightly colored natural objects, some of these gilded.

We would suggest bolder and more artistic architraves for apartment doors, so planned as to admit of a handsome decorative panel, thus imparting to the door a more imposing appearance.

We anticipate supplying sketches of designs, which will illustrate this point. Panels of ceramic ware, as well as of composite colored materials, showing life figures as well as fanciful subjects, are being very successfully introduced into friezes. A glazed surface need not necessarily be displayed where the panels are of porcelain.

CASTING METALS.—Molds for any design are made with a preparation of fine clay, which is fired. The molds, by the new process, are placed in a box from which the air is extracted, the molten metal being forced into them. In this way the most intricate and delicate castings can be made with the sharpness and accuracy of the original chasing.

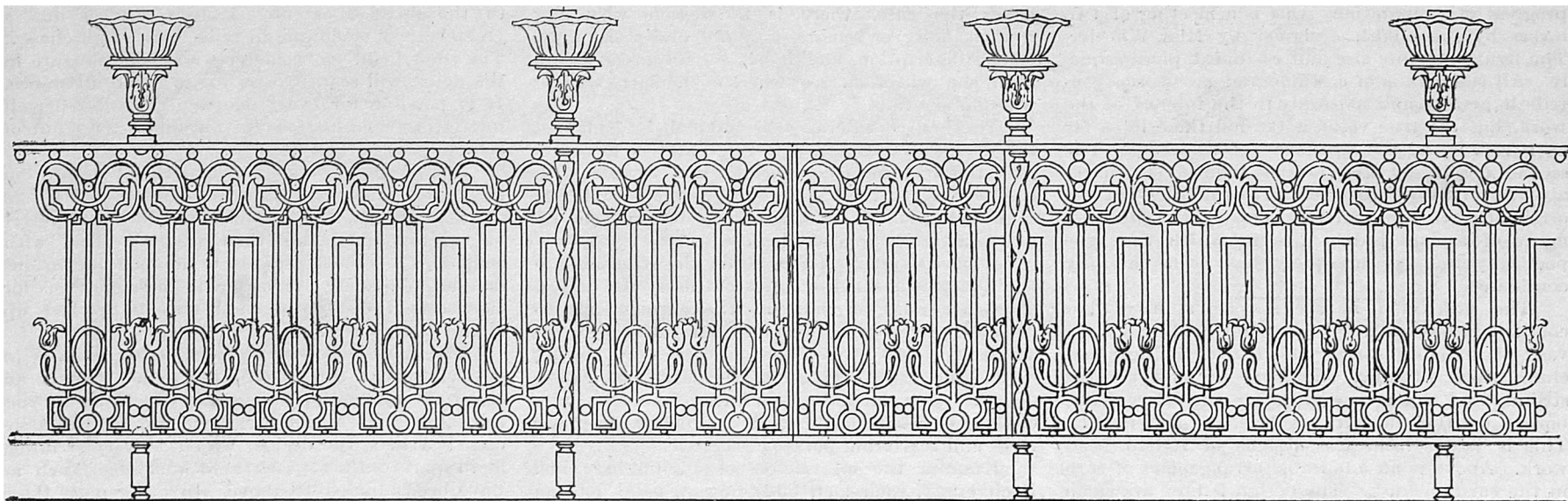


WASHSTAND, JAPANESE DESIGN, BY BRADSTREET, THURBER &amp; CO.

sweep that added to the dignity of its approach, for the road was thereby widened and in the center of the curve were the gates. Fence and gates were of strong, light rods decorated with scroll work and were nearly twenty feet high. The effect was beautiful and imposing.

Whoever has visited the Bourse at Antwerp has doubtless observed the roof, which is of glass supported by spandrels of iron that rise from the walls in a strong, graceful spring. Each support is decorated with flowers, leaves, vines and fruits, representing characteristic vegetation of various quarters of the earth that the merchants of Antwerp may be supposed to have dealings with. These decorations are in enameled iron in the colors of nature, and are twined about the spandrels lightly and simply as if they were vines and leaves in actual growth. There is a suggestion of green-house warmth and natural beauty in that roof.

THERE was often a good deal of art in the old-fashioned door knocker, and it is not unusual to find them now on studio doors or the doors of apartment houses. The faun's head or tiger's head with knocker swinging between his teeth is a picturesque form, and so were the shining brass



IRON RAIL FOR A MEXICAN CATHEDRAL, MADE BY COMPOSITE IRON WORKS AFTER MEXICAN DESIGN.